

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 IO-13 /088 W
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R 271415Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4943

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 13585

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, KN, KS, US

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: STATE 211862

1. BRITISH REACTIONS, BOTH OFFICIAL AND EDITORIAL, TO PANMUNJOM MURDERS WAS STRONGLY CONDEMNATORY OF NORTH KOREAN ACTIONS. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING INCIDENT, FCO SPOKESMAN ISSUED FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO PRESS:

"A. WE DEPLORE THE BRUTAL KILLING BY NORTH KOREAN SOLDIERS OF TWO AMERICAN OFFICERS ATTACHED TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMAND IN KOREA. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PROVOCATION CAME FROM THE NORTHERN SIDE, AND THAT THE UNITED NATIONS SOLDIERS ACTED WITH COMMENDABLE RESTRAINT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT NO NORTH KOREANS WERE KILLED IN THE INCIDENT.

B. THIS INCIDENT UNDERLINES THE REGRETTABLE AGGRESSIVE AND INFLEXIBLE ATTITUDE THE NORTH KOREANS HAVE ADOPTED TOWARDS RECENT ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF A DIVIDED KOREA."

2. OFFICIALS AT THE FCO HAVE FULLY SUPPORTED U.S. ACTION ON THE INCIDENT. THE MURDER OF THE TWO OFFICERS, THEY BELIEVE, OUGHT TO ILLUSTRATE THAT THE KOREA QUESTION IN THE U.N. IS NOT AN ANNUAL PARLIAMENTARY
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EXERCISE BUT A REAL ISSUE AFFECTING INTERNATIONAL

PEACE. THE INCIDENT MIGHT SERVE TO SHIFT A FEW NATIONS WHICH VOTED FOR THE HOSTILE RESOLUTION LAST YEAR INTO THE ABSTAIN COLUMN THIS YEAR (ONE OFFICIAL MENTIONED EGYPT IN THIS CONNECTION). THE FCO DID VOICE A MINOR CONCERN THAT OUR UNDERSTANDABLY HARD-LINE REACTION TO THE INCIDENT MIGHT BE SLIGHTLY OUT OF STEP WITH THIS YEAR'S GENERALLY CONCILIATORY FRIENDLY RESOLUTION. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE TENOR OF THE DEBATE, BUT THE INCIDENT HAS GIVEN NEW URGENCY TO AN ISSUE THAT HAD BECOME OVERLY-IDEOLOGICAL, REPETITIOUS, AND STERILE. WE WOULD EXPECT THE BRITISH TO COOPERATE FULLY IN PRESSING THE MATTER AT THE UN AND IN SELECTED CAPITALS.

3. PRESS COMMENTARY ON US FOLLOW-UP TO INCIDENT HAS BEEN APPROVING IN TONE, ALTHOUGH RIGHT-WING "DAILY TELEGRAPH" HAS SUPPORTED SOUTH KOREAN ARGUMENT THAT US HAS BEEN TOO SOFT IN ACCEPTING POST-INCIDENT NORTH KOREAN STATEMENTS AS A "POSITIVE STEP."

ARMSTRONG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MURDER, DMZ, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON13585
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760327-1294
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760813/aaaaakqs.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 211862
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <08 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTIONS TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT
TAGS: PFOR, UK, KN, KS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006